# 3

# Jerusalem under Hezekiah: an Assyriological Perspective

WILLIAM W. HALLO

## Jerusalem 735–701 B.C.E.

As we gather here to observe the thirtieth centennial, more or less, of the capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites by King David, there are those who question the validity of the disciplines of biblical archaeology[1] and even of biblical history,[2] or at least of their traditional designations. Today I would like to defend the case for "biblical history" by testing it against a single illustrative reign, that of Hezekiah. The choice is easy enough for an Assyriologist, for it is exclusively during this reign that Jerusalem is mentioned by name in cuneiform documents from Mesopotamia (as against those from Egypt in the Amarna period). The reason why it did not appear earlier is not far to seek: Judah had been beyond the interest of the Assyrians (let alone the Babylonians) until 735 or 734 B.C.E., when it was besieged by the northern kingdom of Israel under Pekah and his ally, Rezin of Damascus, in an anti-Assyrian move designed, perhaps, to substitute a more tractable king in Judah for Ahaz who, according to one view, had just assumed the coregency of that land.[3] But this father and immediate predecessor of Hezekiah held staunchly to his pro-Assyrian policy; in a move typical for the period,[4] he appealed for help to Tiglath-Pileser III, with fateful consequences for both Israel, which was shorn of half of its possessions, and Judah, which was reduced to vassalage.[5]

The incorporation of Israel into the Assyrian empire was consummated by its next two kings, Salmaneser V and Sargon II, with the capture of Samaria in 722 B.C.E., a feat variously credited to either king in the different cuneiform sources,[6] and even regarded as two separate events in some modern treatments.[7] Two years later, Sargon returned to the west and referred to himself, apparently in that connection, as *mušakniš māt Iauda*, "the subduer of the

land of Judah,"[8] but to him it was still a land "which is far away."[9] There is no indication that he invaded Judah either in 720[10]or 712 B.C.E. when he, or rather his *turtānu*, returned once more to the western front to deal with the Philistine city-state of Ashdod. Throughout that time Ahaz remained a loyal vassal, deaf to the incitements of the rebels, mindful that he now bordered on Assyrian provinces both to the west (Ashdod) and to the north (Israel), and perhaps encouraged by prophecies like Isa. 20.[11]

The same was true even of Hezekiah in the first decade of his reign, according to some.[12] It was not until the death of Sargon in battle in 705 B.C.E., and the general rebellion that greeted this unique event and the succession of his son Sennacherib, that Hezekiah demonstrably joined the rebellion. Indeed, he became the leader of its western wing and received the embassy of Merodach-baladan, leader of its eastern wing, some time between 705 and 702 B.C.E., i.e., during the latter's exile and second tenure, according to one view.[13] It was only after this that Sennacherib, seeking to maintain the expansionist policy of his predecessors and to deal with rebellion in the decisive manner that had become traditional with them, turned his attention to Jerusalem. He thus confronted Hezekiah, whose reign had begun twenty-two years before his own (727 B.C.E.) according to some scholars,[14] or ten (715 B.C.E.) according to others.[15]

All told, Hezekiah's reign has numerous points of contact with extra-biblical sources. At first glance, it might seem that the last word or at least the latest word had been said about these, for even in the short time since I accepted my assignment for this conference, excellent articles have appeared on the subject by N. Na'aman[16] and O. Borowski,[17] both scholars with an exemplary first-hand knowledge of the material, and it is barely a decade since it was surveyed by H. Tadmor, the acknowledged master of the field.[18] As Tadmor points out, the campaign of Sennacherib against Judah and Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah is the longest account in the Bible of any encounter between Israel and Assyria, and at one and the same time the most detailed description of an Assyrian campaign to the west in the cuneiform sources.[19] If, nevertheless, I am prepared to review the ground once more, it is at least partly because some aspects of it still deserve another look in the light of recent research. More generally, the extra-biblical sources can be used to illustrate and evaluate the divergent methodologies currently competing in biblical historiography.

I shall concentrate first on some objective facts and leave the Jerusalem of ideology to the conclusion. For biblical historians, nothing is more objective than an inscription, and in Hezekiah's case this has long been available in the form of the inscription commemorating the completion of "the tunnel on the eastern side of the City of David which carries the water of the Gihon spring

to a pool at its southern end"[20]—surely the same Gihon mentioned in connection with Hezekiah's hydraulic accomplishments in II Chron. 32:30. Although no royal name is mentioned in it, the paleography points to an eighth century date and makes the association of the feat with that mentioned in Chronicles (cf. also II Kgs. 20:20)[21] highly probable, if not universally accepted.[22] The geologist D. Gill has shown that the tunnel made extensive use of a preexisting natural fissure in the rock,[23] and in his new edition of the inscription, K. Lawson Younger, Jr. has identified this fissure with the ZDH, which remains its main crux.[24] Meantime, the original—which was cut out of the rock by vandals, recovered from a Jerusalem antiquities dealer by the Ottoman authorities, and removed to Istanbul in 1880—remains there to this day despite all efforts to negotiate for its return.[25]

## Jerusalem in 701 B.C.E.

The biblical account describes Hezekiah's waterworks as part of his preparation for the impending Assyrian invasion. In effect, he is quoted as saying "why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" (II Chron. 32:4). So we now turn to the question: when in the reign of Hezekiah did the Assyrians invade Judah? For a long time the so-called two-campaign theory held sway, based on the apparently irreconcilable discrepancies between the biblical account of Sennacherib's invasion and the Assyrian king's own version of the event as preserved in three copies of his annals (one of which is now right here in Jerusalem)[26] as well as its imaginative recasting by Herodotus.[27] But it has become increasingly clear that the minimalist demand for extra-biblical verification of biblical historiography cannot be met in any mechanical way. Neither source is so objective as to be free of the biases imposed by its own ideological agendas. The miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem according to the book of Kings (and Isaiah) can be reconciled with the limited victory claimed by the Assyrians if these biases are taken into account.

Na'aman has shown how the genuine disaster suffered by Judah as a whole could have been subordinated to the overriding recollection of the sparing of Jerusalem in the memory of the Deuteronomistic historian of II Kings.[28] Tadmor in particular has analyzed the official Assyrian version of events to show, point by point, how each of its elements fits into the wider context of the official ideology.[29] Analogous differences appear between the cuneiform sources themselves when they happen to report on the same event from different vantage-points, as is best illustrated by the battle of Der twenty years earlier (722 B.C.E.).[30] Today, only one or two defendants of the two-campaign theory remain;[31] unless we accept the startling hypothesis proposed by B.

Becking, that Sennacherib as crown prince "holding a high military rank" campaigned against Jerusalem in 715 B.C.E. on behalf of his father Sargon II,[32] we can safely date the one campaign of Sennacherib against Judah, the third campaign of his reign, in his fourth year, i.e., 701 B.C.E.[33]

There can also be little doubt that the ultimate goal of Sennacherib's campaign was Jerusalem. But even the Assyrian war machine could not venture an assault against so great a redoubt without first neutralizing the approaches to it. Hence, the brunt of the Assyrian attack was borne by the fortress of Lachish, which in its day—like Latrun in 1948 C.E.—guarded the approaches to the capital[34] and indeed was a kind of second capital itself.[35] Perhaps because the fall of Lachish was a major success of Sennacherib's campaign, it received a disproportionate share of attention not only in his annals but also in the reliefs decorating the "Palace without a rival" which he reconstructed in Nineveh.[36] Between them they illustrate Assyrian siege techniques in an unmatched fashion and, as Tadmor indicates,[37] the reliefs in particular occupy a central position in Sennacherib's new palace. Borowski has used the reliefs, with their depiction of incense stands being carried off as booty, to suggest that Hezekiah's reforms did not go so far as to abolish all offerings to local shrines.[38]

An equally fascinating discovery was made long ago by R. D. Barnett, who identified the peculiar "uniforms" worn by the male deportees from Lachish with those of Sennacherib's troops appearing in other reliefs, and drew from there the conclusion that some contingents of exiles from Lachish were quickly incorporated into the Assyrian army and thus formed the first "Jewish regiment" in history.[39]

The fate of Lachish was shared by many other towns and garrisons in Judah, if not necessarily precisely the forty-six "fortified walled cities and surrounding small towns, which were without number"[40] that Sennacherib in his annals claims to have besieged.[41] Nor is the figure of 200,150 people exiled from them to Assyria exempt from the stereotyped exaggerations of the Assyrian chancery, as newly investigated by M. de Odorico, who described this figure as a " 'high-exact' number."[42] His study cites[43] an earlier one by S. Stohlmann, according to whom this "exile of 701" was every bit as shattering as the more famous exiles of 722 and 586.[44] If it did not have the same impact on its contemporaries, this may be because it did not serve as an object-lesson to the prophets of the time. Rather, it represents a significant convergence of biblical and Assyrian testimony.

Jerusalem itself was, of course, spared, and it was this event that burned itself into Judahite consciousness and later memory. Sennacherib could claim no more than that he had shut up Hezekiah in the city like a bird in his cage, and even this claim was little more than a metaphor borrowed from an in-

scription of Tiglath-pileser III, as Tadmor has shown.[45] The same scholar has made a strong case for suggesting that the Assyrian king did not even try to throw a true siege against the city;[46] the siege of Lachish and the other towns had drained his strength[47] and though he had the means to press a siege if he had chosen to, he was preoccupied with matters closer to home: his great building projects in Nineveh and his "Babylonian problem."[48] He contented himself with exacting heavy tribute, with the liberation of Padi[49] from imprisonment in Jerusalem, his restoration to the throne of Eqron,[50] and the transfer of part of western Judah to Philistine rule (Mic. 1:10–16).[51] The account in II Kgs. 19:35 and Isa. 37:36 attributes Sennacherib's retreat to the angel of the Lord who struck down 185,000 men—a figure uncannily close to the 200,150 exiles of Sennacherib's annals—while Herodotus weighs in with a garbled version of matters that recalls a plague of mice sending the Assyrian army packing. The figures for the size of Hezekiah's tribute in the biblical account (300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold, not including the metals from the Temple doors) are also noticeably similar to those in the Assyrian annals (800 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold), as has often been remarked.[52]

## The Aftermath of the Invasion

What is worth more than passing notice, being a relatively new addition to the roster of extra-biblical verifications, is the denouement of the invasion. According to the next two verses in II Kgs. 19:36–37 and Isa. 37:37–38, Sennacherib, at some point after his return to Nineveh and while sacrificing to his god Nisroch, was murdered by his sons Adramelech and Sharezer, who then fled to Ararat (Urartu), leaving the field to Esarhaddon. This notice has long been met with skepticism by biblical historians. While the assassination of the Assyrian monarch was well established in the cuneiform sources, the identity of the assassins and their subsequent fate apparently was not. In fact, however, it was! Hidden in a letter to Esarhaddon, that had been published already in 1911,[53] was a report on the intrigues surrounding the assassination. It took a 1980 study by S. Parpola to ferret out the true import of this letter and identify one of the assassins in it as Arad-Mullissu, son of the king.[54] From here it is only a relatively small step to the Adramelech of the Bible—even if we do not choose to follow Parpola's further proposal, that the king was crushed alive under one of the colossi guarding the entrance to the Temple where, according to a misinterpretation of the annals of his grandson Assurbanipal[55] or W. von Soden's reading of other Assyrian evidence on the event,[56] the murder took place. As to the flight to Urartu, given the constant warfare

between Assyria and Urartu in the first millennium, it remains distinctly plausible that Urartu would have been eager to shelter a rebel against the king of Assyria. M. Garsiel adds to all this the interpretation put on the very name of Sennacherib, or what he calls its "Midrashic Name derivation" (MND), which links it to the Hebrew roots for "destroy" (ḤRB) and "shame" (ḤRP) in defiance of its plain Akkadian etymology (II Kgs. 19:16–17, 24 = Isa. 37:17–18, 25).[57]

On the Judahite side, too, the abortive invasion had an aftermath, at least in the narrative as arranged in II Kings and Isaiah. Hezekiah fell ill immediately after or, according to Na'aman,[58] immediately before the siege, and though the king recovered, he associated (or was required to associate)[59] his son Manasseh with him as coregent for most of the remaining fifteen years of his reign, according to one theory, waiting only until the latter was old enough—twelve according to E. Thiele—to take on the duties of the office. This solution solves a knotty problem of biblical chronology.[60]

The pericope on Hezekiah's illness has an almost folkloristic character, but at least three of its four discrete parts can be paralleled from extra-biblical sources. I have no comparative data for therapy by fig cake or fig paste[61]—*dᵉvelet tᵉ'ēnīm*—of II Kgs. 20:7 (= Isa. 38:21) which many commentators regard as extraneous to the pericope.[62] Even here, however, I may call attention to the existence of an equivalent concoction called—in the plural—*kamānāte ša titti* in Akkadian[63] and *gidešta* in Sumerian, though in the latter case decorated with dates or date syrup rather than figs.[64] Isaiah's initial prediction "For thou shalt die, and not live" (38:1)[65] echoes "he (she) shall die, he (she) shall not live" of the Laws of Eshnunna,[66] of a medical text, and of the hemerologies of Mesopotamia, as seen by M. Stol.[67] The divine reversal of this prediction is accompanied by an assurance of divine protection for Jerusalem (38:6), at least for the time being.[68]

Unlike his father Ahaz, Hezekiah had appealed for *divine* help in the face of Jerusalem's siege,[69] and the response had come together with this first and most explicit biblical allusion to the (temporary) inviolability of the city as demonstrated by a divine sign (*ôt*). In the words of Isaiah, " 'I am going to make the shadow on the steps, which has descended on the dial (Heb. 'steps')[70] of Ahaz because of the sun, recede ten steps'. And the sun('s shadow) receded ten steps, the same steps it had descended" (38:8). Without going into the scientific problems raised by this sign, it is well to recall Y. Yadin's discussion of an Egyptian sundial or rather sun-staircase of the type alluded to here.[71] It is preserved in a model in the Cairo Museum and catches the shadow of the sun, not like a sundial where it is cast by a pole on a semicircular surface, but rather by two walls on two flights of steps. With the help of an improved

reading of the biblical passage provided by the Isaiah Scroll from Qumran, as read by S. Iwry,[72] it is thus possible to preserve the "sun-staircase" of the tradition, even if the "sundial" has to go.[73]

But most important for me personally is the new light still being shed on the psalm of individual thanksgiving, which in the version in Isaiah is attributed to Hezekiah after his recovery. Such attributions are familiar, for instance, from the prayers of Hannah and Jonah, and in a recent study J. Watts tends to dismiss them as created or positioned *ad rem*, though rendering a useful service in treating it in the context of the entire genre of what he calls "insert hymns in Hebrew narrative."[74] The general question of the relationship of narrative and poetic versions of given biblical pericopes is a complicated one.[75] The case of Hezekiah's prayer is distinguished by the fact that it is described as a "writing" or even a "letter" (*mikhtav*). I have therefore long tried to connect it with the *mikhtam* genre in the Psalter on the one hand, and with the cuneiform literary genre which I have identified as the "letter-prayer" on the other.[76]

In particular, I called attention to the emergence of the *royal* letter-prayer as a means for appealing to the deity in matters affecting the health of the king or the welfare of his kingdom.[77] Admittedly, the genre flourished more than a thousand years before Isaiah, but it did not die out then. At least one of the prototypes dating to the nineteenth century B.C.E. survived in recognizable form into the seventh! This was already indicated in my edition of the original Sumerian text[78] and has more recently been confirmed in R. Borger's edition of the late bilingual Sumero-Akkadian version.[79] While this is not enough in and of itself to date the prayer of Hezekiah or to derive its generic inspiration from cuneiform models, it at least has served to remove a weighty chronological argument against the juxtaposition of the two genres. Moreover, a native Assyrian genre of letters to the god Assur had developed in the meantime for public proclamation after major triumphs such as the eighth campaign of Sargon. It is even possible that the third campaign of Sennacherib was so commemorated in the form of the so-called Azeka inscription as originally interpreted by Na'aman.[80]

If the biblical historians and prophets adopted the motifs and sometimes even the idioms of the Assyrian royal chancery, as has been argued, for example, by H. L. Ginsberg[81] and S. Paul,[82] they must have been equally capable of deliberately turning the tables on Sennacherib and treating his death as a punishment for his sins against God and Jerusalem.[83] It thus appears within the realm of possibility that they similarly adapted the genre of the royal letter-prayer for the story of Hezekiah and the rescue of Jerusalem.

With the death of Hezekiah in 698 (Tadmor) or 687 (Thiele), the name

of Jerusalem again disappears entirely from the cuneiform records of Babylonia and Assyria, as is easily demonstrated thanks to the work of S. Parpola[84] and R. Zadok.[85] When the Babylonian Chronicle (5 rev. 12) reports on the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 B.C.E., it says simply that the king "pitched his camp in front of the city of Judaea."[86]

## Jerusalem in Ideology

A few speculative remarks may be ventured on the Jerusalem of ideology, a central theme of this conference. I have nothing to contribute to the question of its sanctity, except perhaps to recall the etymology—whether real or popular—most often offered for its name, i.e., City of Shalim, a deity with ample connections not only to Ugarit but to "the earliest Semitic pantheon" of Mesopotamia, as presented by J. J. M. Roberts.[87] This etymology is usually buttressed by appeal to the name of the city in the shortened form Shalem found in the Bible in connection with Melkizedek[88] or in parallelism with Zion.[89]

Perhaps a contextual light can be thrown on the concept of the city's centrality—the background, as it were—of its later reputation as the *omphalos*, the navel of the earth. The concept has had both defenders, beginning with W. Roscher[90] and A. J. Wensinck,[91] and critics, notably S. Talmon who prefers to regard the term *tābōr hā'āretz*[92] as a purely topographical feature.[93] We know little of the systematic geographical insights of the biblical writers beyond such texts as the Table of Nations in Gen. 10, whereas we are quite well informed about the geographic and even the cartographic attainments of the Mesopotamians, which were considerable.[94] An insightful study by P. Michalowski has taught us to pay attention in the Mesopotamian case to what he calls "mental maps and ideology."[95] He was particularly concerned with the ideological role of the early Mesopotamian designations of foreign and distant lands such as Aratta in the east, Dilmun in the south, and especially Subartu in the north. But his insights can equally well be applied to the case of a native city at the very heart of a culture and its beliefs,[96] and they can be paralleled by the later case of the famous Babylonian *mappa mundi*, last edited by W. Horowitz and discussed by M. Stol, where Babylon occupies a central position in the top of the circle representing the known world.[97]

Thus, we are led to a related point: the city's inviolability. I have already alluded to this ideological component of the biblical narratives.[98] It is expressed once implicitly, by the juxtaposition of Sennacherib's siege and his assassination as if to say *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, and once explicitly, when the prophet conveys the divine promise of protection for the city. In the older view of, for

instance, J. Hayes, "the tradition of Zion's inviolability" and invulnerability goes back to pre-Hezekian and even to pre-Davidic and pre-Israelite times,"[99] while in the classic treatment by B. Childs, this "Zion tradition" starts and ends with "Isaiah and the Assyrian crisis."[100] What, then, is the comparative evidence? Clearly, only one city in the Mesopotamian experience is a candidate for a comparable status: Babylon. Its inviolability is implied by the respect it was accorded by the Assyrians, the long-time rivals of the Babylonians, yet also their debtors in matters religious and cultural. Only two Assyrian kings ventured to destroy the city, and both paid a heavy price. The first was Tukulti-Ninurta I in the thirteenth century B.C.E., who ended his days in a fiery death besieged in his own capital that he had newly built and named after himself. The second was Sennacherib—and if the biblical historian and prophet had no trouble in seeing his assassination as retribution for the abortive siege of Jerusalem, neither did the court scribes of Nabonidus in treating it as fit retribution for his consummated destruction of Babylon, as noted by J. J. M. Roberts[101] and, once more, by H. Tadmor.[102] B. Porter, in her study of Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy, has shown how Sennacherib's son and successor marshalled all the physical and spiritual resources of the empire to reverse the effects of his father's depredations.[103] P.-A. Beaulieu goes even further. According to him, both the founder of the Chaldaean dynasty, Nabopolassar, and its last king, Nabonidus, believed that Marduk himself had caused the assassination of Sennacherib, the destruction of Assyria, and the restoration of Babylon and its cult.[104] The analogy goes a long way toward explaining the tremendous role played by the siege of Jerusalem in the consciousness of biblical prophets and historians, and the gap between their view of the event and that of the Assyrians.[105]

## Methodological Conclusions

What, then, is the general methodological lesson we can learn from the case of Jerusalem under Hezekiah? The simple test of the minimalists, that the biblical version of events must have extra-biblical, preferably contemporaneous, verification before it can be regarded as historical, is an impossible demand even in the best of circumstances as here, where the events loom so large in Assyrian royal inscriptions and art, but are presented in such a widely divergent manner. However, the maximalist willingness to accept the biblical version until falsified by extra-biblical sources, preferably contemporaneous and bearing on the same matters,[106] also lacks a rational basis, given the randomness of these sources and their accidental discovery. Because Mesopotamian references to Jerusalem by name were confined to the single reign of Sennacherib

and his contemporary Hezekiah, we cannot treat the absence of conflicting sources about Jerusalem in other periods as confirmation of every biblical statement about the city. The task of the biblical historian thus remains as before: to weigh the comparative evidence point by point in order to discover, if possible, the nature of its convergence with the biblical data and the reasons for its divergence.[107]

## Notes

1. W. Dever as reported by H. Shanks, "Should the term 'Biblical Archaeology' be abandoned?," *BAR* 7/3 (1981), 54–57.

2. K. W. Whitelam at the joint meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research, Philadelphia, November 1995. See now idem, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: the Silencing of Palestinian History* (London and New York, 1996). Cf. also H. Shanks, " 'Annual Miracle' Visits Philadelphia," *BAR* 22/2 (1996), 52–56, 69.

3. E. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, 1977), 46–51; idem, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*[2] (Grand Rapids, 1983), 129–34.

4. M. Liverani, "Kitru, katāru," *Mesopotamia* 17 (1982), 43–66; N. Na'aman, "Hezekiah and the Kings of Assyria," *Tel Aviv* 21 (1994): 239 and note 5; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB 11 (Garden City, NY, 1988), 184–94; S. B. Parker, "Appeals for Military Intervention: Stories from Zinjirli and the Bible," *BA* 59 (1996), 213–24.

5. For the possible parallel to the virtually simultaneous appeal by Nabonassar of Babylon for Tiglath-pileser's help against the Aramaeans and Chaldaeans, see most recently W. Hallo, "The Nabonassar Era and other epochs in Mesopotamian Chronology and Chronography," *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs*, eds. E. Leichty et al., Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 9 (Philadelphia, 1988), 189f.

6. B. Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: an Historical and Archaeological Study*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East 2 (Leiden, 1992)—based on his thesis, *De Ondergang van Samaria* (Meppel, 1985).

7. H. Winckler, *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* (Leipzig, 1892), 15–20, H. Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958), 34–39, and especially Becking (above, note 6), 34–45.

8. Becking (ibid., 54–55) wants to associate this claim with the alleged campaign of 715.

9. Na'aman (above, note 4), 235.

10. Let alone in 715: Becking (above, note 6), 54 and note 30.

11. Na'aman (above, note 4), 239f., 243, 247f.; G. L. Mattingly, "An Archaeological Analysis of Sargon's Campaign against Ashdod," *Near Eastern Archaeological Society Bulletin* 17 (1981), 47–64. Cf. the situation of the northern kingdom in the time of Tiglath-pileser III, when Israel "became a much smaller state surrounded by three Assyrian provinces on its former territory"; Becking (above, note 6), 1.

12. Na'aman (above, note 4).

13. J. A. Brinkman, "Merodachbaladan," *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim*, eds. R. D. Biggs and J. A. Brinkman (Chicago, 1964), 31–33. Cf. Na'aman (above, note 4), 244, with prior literature. Differently H. Tadmor and M. Cogan, "Hezekiah's Fourteenth Year: the King's Illness and the Babylonian Embassy," *EI*, XVI (Jerusalem, 1982), 198–201 (Hebrew; Eng. summary, 258–59).

14. E.g., Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 15 and 228, based on II Kgs. 18:1 and 9f. Becking ([above, note 6], 53) even argues for a coregency with Ahaz in the preceding year.

15. Thiele, *Chronology* (above, note 3), 52–54, idem, *Mysterious Numbers* (above, note 3), 174–76, followed among many others by Na'aman (above, note 4), 236–38. See now especially A. F. Rainey, "review of J. A. Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*," *JAOS* 116 (1996), 546–48. I also follow Thiele; see already W. W. Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish: Assyria and Israel in the Light of New Discoveries," *BA* 23 (1960), 35, 55; idem and W. K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: a History* (New York, 1971), 140 (2nd ed., Fort Worth, TX, 1998), 136. Note especially the extension of the Passover to the north in Hezekiah's first year (II Chron. 30), for which see H. Haag, "Das Mazzenfest des Hiskia," *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift für K. Elliger*, eds. H. Gese and H. P. Rüger, AOAT 18 (Kevelär, 1973), 87–94.

16. N. Na'aman, "Ahaz's and Hezekiah's Policy toward Assyria in the days of Sargon and Sennacherib's Early Years," *Zion* 59 (1994), 5–30 (Hebrew; English summary, p. v); idem (above, note 4).

17. O. Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," *BA* 58 (1995), 148–55.

18. H. Tadmor, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: Historical and Historiographic Considerations," *Zion* 50 (1985), 65–80 (Hebrew; English summary, p. x).

19. Ibid., 66.

20. Borowski (above, note 17), 153.

21. On this verse see most recently Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 221f., 260, with previous literature.

22. A contrary conclusion has now been arrived at by J. Rogerson and P. R. Davies, "Was the Siloam tunnel built by Hezekiah?" *BA* 59 (1996), 138–49. But see now R. S. Hendel, "The Date of the Siloam Inscription: a Rejoinder to Rogerson and Davies," *BA* 59 (1996), 233–37; J. M. Cahill, "A Rejoinder to 'Was the Siloam Tunnel Built by Hezekiah?'," *BA* 60 (1997), 184–85; J. A. Hacket et al., "Defusing Pseudo-scholarship: the Siloam Inscription Ain't Hasmonaean," *BAR* 23/2 (March/April 1997), 41–50, 68.

23. D. Gill, "How They Met—Geology Solves Longstanding Mystery of Hezekiah's Tunnelers," *BAR* 20/4 (1994), 20–33, 64; cf. J. N. Wilford, "Biblical Puzzle Solved: Jerusalem Tunnel is a Product of Nature," *New York Times* (August 9, 1994), C 1, 8.

24. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "The Siloam Tunnel Inscription," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 26 (1994), 543–56.

25. H. Shanks, "Returning Cultural Artifacts—Turkey is all take, no give," *BAR* 17/3 (1991), 12; idem, "Please return the Siloam Inscription to Jerusalem," ibid., 58–60.

26. P. Ling-Israel, "The Sennacherib Prism in the Israel Museum—Jerusalem," *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology Dedicated to Pinhas Artzi*, eds. J. Klein and A. Skaist (Ramat Gan, 1990), 213–48 and Pls. i–xvi.

27. For a representative statement, see E. Nicholson, "The Centralisation of the Cult in Deuteronomy," *VT* 13 (1963), 380–89. It is no longer found in idem, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia, 1967).

28. Na'aman (above, note 4), 247–50.

29. Tadmor (above, note 18).

30. Hallo (above, note 15), 53, 59.

31. Notably W. H. Shea, "One Invasion or two?" *Ministry* (March, 1980), 26–28; idem, "Sennacherib's Second Palestinian Campaign," *JBL* 104 (1985), 401–18; cf. on this Hallo and Simpson (above, note 15), 142 (2nd ed., 138); W. Hallo, "The Expansion of Cuneiform Literature," *PAAJR* 46–47 (1980), 316f. and note 43; S. Stohlmann, "The Judean Exile after

701 B.C.E.," *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method*, eds. W. W. Hallo, J. C. Moyer and L. G. Perdue (Winona Lake, 1983), 158f., note 37. For others, see P. Dion, "Sennacherib's Expedition to Palestine," *Eglise et Théologie* 20 (1989), 5–25.

32. Becking (above, note 6), 54f. and note 35.

33. See in detail Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 245–51.

34. D. Ussishkin, "Lachish," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV (New York, 1992), 121–23.

35. B. Mazar *apud* Tadmor (above, note 18), 77, note 32.

36. D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel-Aviv, 1982); idem (above, note 34), 123f.; Cf. J. M. Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago, 1991).

37. Tadmor (above, note 18), 76–77.

38. Borowski (above, note 17).

39. R. D. Barnett ("The Siege of Lachish," *IEJ* 8 [1958], 161–64) cited Hallo (above, note 15), 59; cf. ibid., 39, Fig. 2; and 45, Fig. 3. For a more nuanced assessment, see Stohlmann (above, note 31), 162–64.

40. Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 246.

41. 46 URU.MEŠ-*šú dan-nu-ti* É.BÀD.MEŠ *ù* URU.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ *ša li-me-ti-šú-nu* (Chicago Prism iii, 19f.).

42. M. de Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, State Archives of Assyria Supplements 3 (Helsinki, 1995), 114. On p. 171 he lists it among the " 'very high-exact' numbers" or the "round numbers exacted." For an earlier assessment of the figures, see H. Sauren, "Sennacherib, les arabes, les déportés juifs," *Die Welt des Orients* 16 (1985), 80–99. For a reading of the comparable figures in the census totals of Num. 1 and 26, see W. Hallo, *The Book of the People*, Brown Judaic Studies 225 (Atlanta, 1991), 82f.

43. De Odorico (above, note 42), 114, note 305. Cf. also A. R. Millard, "Large Numbers in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *Ah, Assyria: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, eds. M. Cogan and I. Eph'al, SH 33 (Jerusalem, 1991), 213–22; D. M. Fouts, "Another Look at Large Numbers in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *JNES* 53 (1994), 205–11.

44. Stohlmann (above, note 31), esp. pp. 174–75.

45. Tadmor (above, note 18), 75; cf. now idem, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III King of Assyria* (Jerusalem, 1994), 78f.

46. Tadmor (above, note 18), 75.

47. Ibid., 78.

48. Ibid., 69–70, 77.

49. The recent discovery of a sixth-century inscription mentioning the building of a temple in Eqron by Padi not only clinches the identification of Tell Miqne with the ancient Philistine city, but also confirms that Padi was a dynastic name there.

50. The event could hardly have taken place any sooner. Its placement in the Assyrian annals illustrates their tendency to rearrange chronology to suit structural requirements of the inscription; see Tadmor (above, note 18), 74.

51. See New Jewish Publication Society version (NJV) ad loc.; for the broader significance, see W. Hallo, "Scurrilous Etymologies," *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, eds. D. P. Wright et al. (Winona Lake, 1995), 771. Cf. also A. Demsky, "The Houses of Achzib: a Critical Note on Mica 1:14b," *IEJ* 16 (1966), 211–15.

52. E.g., Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 229 *ad* II Kgs. 18:14 (not in Isaiah).

53. R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, XI (Chicago, 1911), no. 1091.

54. S. Parpola, "The Murderer of Sennacherib," *Death in Mesopotamia* (Copenhagen, 1980), 171–82. Cf. also S. Zawadzki, "Oriental and Greek Tradition about the Death of Sennacherib," *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 4 (1990), 69–72.

55. Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 240; W. Hallo, "The Death of Kings: Traditional Historiography in Contextual Perspective," *Ah, Assyria . . .* (above, note 43), 162f.

56. W. von Soden, "Gibt es Hinweise auf die Ermordung Sanheribs im Ninurta-Tempel (wohl) in Kalah in Texten aus Assyrien?," *N.A.B.U.* (1990), 16–17, no. 22; cf. Hallo (above, note 51), 774 and note 58.

57. M. Garsiel, *Midrashic Name Derivation in the Bible* (Ramat Gan, 1987), 32–33 (Hebrew); idem, *Biblical Names: a Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (Ramat Gan, 1991), 46–48; Hallo (above, note 51), 773, note 47.

58. Na'aman (above, note 4), 236–38, 244.

59. As suggested by Na'aman (ibid, 239 and note 3).

60. Thiele, *Chronology* (above, note 3), 27–28, 66; idem, *Mysterious Numbers* (above, note 3), 64, 173–78.

61. So J. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Insert Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOT Supplement Series 139 (Sheffield, 1992), 119.

62. Cogan and Tadmor (above, note 4), 255–57.

63. C. H. W. Johns, *Assyrian Deeds and Documents* (Cambridge, 1898), no. 1095:8, cited by von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* ((Wiesbaden, 1966–), 430a, s.v. *kamānu*, and edited by J. N. Postgate, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire*, Studia Pohl Series Maior 3 (Rome, 1974), 336 (cf. ibid., 70–71, 84–85, 221–22); F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II*, State Archives of Assyria 11 (Helsinki, 1995), n. 28. On *kamānu* and its possible Hebrew cognate *kawwan*, "sacrificial cake in the shape of a vagina," in Jer. 44: 19, and even possibly the *kiyyun* (sacrificial cake?) of the enigmatic passage Amos 5:26, see W. Hallo, "New Moons and Sabbaths: a Case Study in the Contrastive Approach," *HUCA* 48 (1977), 15. On Amos 5:26, see also idem, "Cult Statue and Divine Image: a Preliminary Study," *Scripture in Context II* (above, note 31), 15, note 114; S. Paul, "Hosea 8:8–10 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Epithets," *Studies in Bible*, ed. S. Japhet, SH 31 (Jerusalem, 1986), 196 and elsewhere.

64. W. Hallo, "Lugalbanda Excavated," *JAOS* 103 (1983), 174–75, l. 291; translation based on the variant, which B. Alster ("Ur 3 Texts in Danish Private Collections," *Oriens Antiquus* 26 [1987], 6 and n. 4) prefers to restore as *làl-zú-lum-ma* and translates "date syrup."

65. *Kî mēt attā welō* transl. follows old Jewish Publication Society version (= Authorized Version). NJV has "For you are going to die; you will not get well."

66. *Imât ul iballuṭ* in paragraphs 12, 13, and 28. Latest translation by M. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, Writings from the Ancient World 6 (Atlanta, 1995), 60–61, 63.

67. M. Stol, "Diagnosis and Therapy in Babylonian Medicine," *Jaarbericht . . . van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap "Ex Oriente Lux"* 32 (1993), 53 and notes 61–62.

68. Watts (above, note 61), 121–22 and p. 122, note 1.

69. Cf. esp. II Kgs. 19:15–19 = Isa. 37:15–20. For other contrasts with the siege under Ahaz, see C. R. Seitz, "Account A and the Annals of Sennacherib: a Reassessment," *JSOT* 58 (1993), 54–56.

70. *ma'alot.*

71. Y. Yadin, "The Dial of Ahaz," *EI*, V (Jerusalem, 1958), 91–96 and Pl. 10 (Hebrew; Eng. Summary, 88*f.).

72. S. Iwry, "The Qumran Isaiah and the End of the Dial of Ahaz," *BASOR* 147 (1957), 27–33.

73. Ibid.; W. Hallo, *Origins: the Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East 6 (Leiden, 1996), 123.

74. Watts (above, note 61), 118–31; cf. H. P. Mathys (*Dichter und Beter: Theologen aus*

*spätalttestamentlicher Zeit* [Freiburg, 1994]; ref. courtesy R. R. Wilson) who, however, does not include Hezekiah's psalm in his survey, presumably regarding it as earlier than his other examples.

75. See previous note and cf. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "Heads! Tails! or the Whole Coin?! Contextual Method and Intertextual Analysis: Judges 4 and 5," *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture in Context IV*, Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 11 (Lewiston, NY, 1991), 109–46.

76. W. Hallo, "Individual Prayer in Sumerian: the Continuity of a Tradition, *JAOS* 88 (1968), 71–89.

77. Idem, "The Royal Correspondence of Larsa: I. A Sumerian Prototype for the Prayer of Hezekiah?" *Kramer Anniversary Volume: Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer*, ed. B. L. Eichler, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 25 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1976) 209–24.

78. Idem, "The Royal Correspondence of Larsa: II. The Appeal to Utu," *ZIKIR ŠUMIM: Assyriological Studies Presented to F.R. Kraus*, eds. G. van Driel et al. (Leiden, 1982), 95–109; previously idem, "Letters, Prayers and Letter-Prayers," *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem, 1981).

79. R. Borger, *Ein Brief Sin-idinnams von Larsa an den Sonnengott*, Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, I. Phil.-hist. Klasse 2 (Göttingen, 1991). The intervening stage of the composition has meantime been identified at Emar; see M. Civil, "Sin-iddinam in Emar and SU.A=Simeški," *N.A.B.U.* 1996, 36-37.

80. N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on his Campaign to Judah," *BASOR* 214 (1974), 25–39; idem (above, note 4), 245–47. Becking ([above, note 6], 3, note 8, and 54, note 50) dates the text(s) to 715 B.C.E.!

81. H.L. Ginsberg, "Reflexes of Sargon in Isaiah after 715 B.C.E.," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 47–53.

82. S. Paul, "Deutero-Isaiah and Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 180–86; idem, "Sargon's Administrative Diction in II Kings 17:27," *JBL* 88 (1969), 73–74; idem (above, note 63).

83. Tadmor (above, note 18), 78.

84. S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 6 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970).

85. R. Zadok, *Geographical Names according to New- and Late-Babylonian Texts*, Repertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 8 (Wiesbaden, 1985).

86. URU *Ia-a-hu-du*. A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5 (Glückstadt, 1975), 102; cf. W. Hallo, "Nebukadnezar Comes to Jerusalem," *Through the Sound of Many Voices: Writings (for) W. Gunther Plaut*, ed. J. V. Plaut (Toronto, 1982) 40–57.

87. J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, The Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies 2 (Baltimore and London, 1972), 65 and 113, notes 414–18.

88. Gen. 14:18.

89. Ps. 76:3.

90. W. H. Roscher, *Omphalos* (Leipzig, 1913); idem, *Neue Omphalosstudien* (Leipzig, 1915); idem, *Der Omphalosgedanke* (Leipzig, 1918).

91. A. J. Wensinck, *The Idea of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, Verhandelingen der koninklijke Akademie der Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, nieuwe reeks 17/1 (Amsterdam, 1916).

92. Judg. 9:36–37; Ezek. 38:11–12.

93. S. Talmon, "The 'Navel of the Earth' and the Comparative Method," *Scripture in History and Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, eds. A. L. Merrill and T. W.

Overholt Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 17 (Pittsburgh, 1977) 243–68; reprinted in idem, *Literary Studies in the Hebrew Bible: Form and Content* (Jerusalem and Leiden, 1993), 50–75.

94. W. Hallo, "The Road to Emar," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 18 (1964), 57–88; idem (above, note 73), 78–97.

95. P. Michalowski, "Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu," *The Origins of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.*, ed. H. Weiss (Guilford, CT, ;1986), 129–56.

96. I may illustrate this with the case of the spring Gihon which played such a major role in supplying the city with water, and hence in allowing a city to rise on this otherwise forbidding site in the first place. That spring has a name reminiscent of the second of the four rivers of paradise according to Gen. 4:13. The first is Pishon and the other two are the familiar Tigris and Euphrates. Did the first two names simply mean something like Gusher and Bubbler respectively (Speiser) and therefore represent familiar, almost general hydronyms? Or did the biblical author deliberately insert the name of Jerusalem's spring into his version of the Eden tradition in order to suggest that Jerusalem partook of a touch of Paradise? We can see a hint of a tradition of what could be interpreted as four rivers around a central area among the designs incised on the reverse of very early schooltexts from Fara (Shuruppak) and Abu Salabikh in Mesopotamia and Ebla in Syria (Hallo [above, note 73], 81f.). My thanks to Larry Stager for a helpful discussion on these points.

97. W. Horowitz, "The Babylonian *mappa mundi*," *Iraq* 50 (1988), 147–66; M. Stol, "De babylonische wereldkaart," *Phoenix* 34/2 (1988–89), 29–35.

98. Above, notes 68–69.

99. J. H. Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Involability," *JBL* 82 (1963), 419–26.

100. B. S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (Naperville, IL, 1967).

101. J. J. M. Roberts, "Myth versus History," *CBQ* 38 (1976), 10.

102. Tadmor (above, note 18), 79 and note 40.

103. B. N. Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics: Figurative Aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian Policy* (Philadelphia, 1993).

104. P.-A. Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.*, Yale Near Eastern Researches 10 (New Haven and London, 1989), 105–106, 115.

105. See already the classic statement by Childs (above, note 100). Cf. now M. Weinfeld ("Jerusalem—a Political and Spiritual Capital" [in press]), who dates the earliest messianic expectations to Hezekiah's reign.

106. Stated with unusual candor by Becking ([above, note 6], 52): "the dates in the Book of Kings can only be considered as untrustworthy when they can be falsified by contemporaneous evidence."

107. A similar point is made, if briefly, by Seitz (above, note 69).